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November 18, 2021

Debra Shore
Regional Administrator
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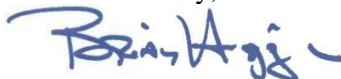
Congratulations on your recent appointment as the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Regional Administrator for Region 5 and oversight of the Great Lakes National Program Office. Your expertise in environmental stewardship, dedication to science, and commitment to the health of the Great Lakes will serve the EPA and residents of the Great Lakes basin well. It was a pleasure to speak with you in October, and I write today to follow up on that conversation with an invitation to Buffalo to further develop plans for rehabilitating our waterways, de-list the Buffalo River as an Area of Concern, and share the success story of Western New York's waterfront.

Like many Great Lakes communities, Western New York's history of one of extraction and pollution due to industrialization, creating long-term, harmful environmental hazards that impact our health and quality of life to this day. The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) has proven successful at rehabilitating these waterways and created economic benefits in the process. According to a report on the Economic Impacts of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative from the University of Michigan, every dollar invested in GLRI yields \$3.35 in return, and in areas like Buffalo, the return is over \$4. GLRI demonstrates that caring for these waterways is a sound investment, both environmentally and economically.

The *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, signed into law by President Biden this week, provides \$1 billion in additional funding to GLRI, allowing the acceleration of meaningful projects that will have generational impacts. In my district, this includes the revitalization of the Buffalo River as well as the Niagara River and Scajaquada Creek. Approximately fifty years ago, the Buffalo River caught on fire due to contamination from heavy industrial development. Today, Western New Yorkers and visitors alike use the river for recreation such as kayaking, fishing, and boating. However, the waters of the Buffalo River remain unsuitable for swimming and other "beneficial use impairments" remain. With these increased resources, I ask that you work to develop a realistic timeline to illustrate when the remaining beneficial use impairments for the Buffalo River will be addressed, including the fact that its waters are not suitable for swimming, and a target date for de-listing the Buffalo River as an Area of Concern.

I look forward to hosting you for a visit to Western New York, and to working together on issues relating to the Great Lakes and the remediation of the Buffalo River. Thank you for your consideration and I wish you the best as you begin your new role.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress